A MODELL OF A CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.

Matth. 18. 20.

When two or three be gathered together in my name I I will be in the midst of them.

CAMBRIDGE,

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S. W. Th. 84.

BIBLIOTHECA · BODLEIANA

To his honoured friend Mr. S. *Hartlib.*

Worthy Sir,

I *Send you back this* golden *diſcourſe, as your excellent friend* M. Comenius *juſtly tearms it, with all thanks; and though in a courſer habit, yet (I*

hope) not in a disguise.

Your self (who were acquainted with some members of this Society in Germanie) can witnesse tis more then an Idæa; and tis a great deal of pitty both that warre discontinued it where it was first instituted: and that it is not again reviv'd among such minds, as have wholly espoused themselves to great and publick endeavours.

They who are plea-

sed

ſed to conſider what the reſults of aſſociated *labours are, in compariſon of* ſequeſtred, *& aſſigne the increaſe of the Jeſuits to this cauſe, will eaſely wiſh that which the Excellent Lord* Verulam *did ſome years before,* Talis cum ſis, utinam noſter eſſes; *for as tis obſerv'd in the great work of* Providence, *that Commodities are* diſperſ'd *into ſeverall Countries to occaſion mutuall* relief

and consequently Commerce, *why may we not judge it of minds? since one Countrey can neither* engrosse *all great spirits, nor one great spirit all knowledge.*

They who shall shrink back from it as an attempt of difficultie, may blame the stubbornesse *and* lowneſſe *of their own thoughts, which is the greatest hinderance; they who utterly condemne it may remember that tis* un-

uncharitable *to condemne pious endeavours without cauſe, eſpecially thoſe who do not ſtoup to any ſecondary Aims; neither can they without* Retrogradation *into* beſtialitie, *turn their backs of a deſigne ſo advantagious to* mankind *whereof they are Members.*

But Sir I treſpaſſe too farre upon you and this draught, by a too large preliminarie Aviſo, *give me onely*

leave to beg pardon for my Errata's here and there, since they were committed in obedience to your Summons, which shall be ever joyfully obey'd By

Sir,

Your truly

affectionate friend.

J. H.

¶ A Modell of a Christian Society.

THat nothing approches nearer God then Unity, nor recedes further from him then dissonancy, the consciences and experience of all men do sufficiently evince: yet doth that enemy of mankind the divel sow such dissentions in their hearts, that while every one wholly applyes himself to his own particular, all faint under the generall bur-

then, and raiſe nothing but various complaints, now exclaiming againſt the difficulty of nature, now accuſing the importunity of the world, now deploring the ſhortneſſe of life, now blaming the ſlipperineſſe of fortune, and in a word, ſhaking, by any excuſe, the fault from themſelves, while all theſe evils might be moſt happily redreſſ'd, and good things promoted (ſo farre as the ſtate of man and the world would permit) by a free communication of all things among good men.

Which being obſerved by the wiſeſt of men both in ancient and modern times, they gathered

gathered into societies, regulated by such orders as they had agreed on among themselves; so that, what was beyond the power of one man or a few might be supplied, strengthened, and (as it were) admitted to the participation of the whole world, by the joint association of many: which ever brought along with it such an apparent commodity and expediteneſſe, that beſides abundance of wealth, it hath contributed a great deal of knowledge of the world, and conſequently much fuell to humane curioſity.

Yea and Antichriſt, that he might to the utmoſt of his

his power oppose his detested Christ, hath fill'd the World with multiplicity of factions, not so much to procure security and content to his adherents; as that himself, being the first mover, might turn about all the inferiour orbs at his pleasure, and move the World by Engines of his own placing, and by such means usurpe a terrene deity, which hath been answered with such successe, that no one man hitherto hath more odiously deceived the rest, more craftily overcome them, nor more haughtily reign'd over them. So that it may justly be thought a wonder, the World

World being as it were renewed, all its decaies restored under the sunne of Religion and noon-tide of Learning, why so many of the best and wisest do satisfie themselves with a bare desire of a Colledge or society of best things, and assume not boldnesse to endeavour to rise to the highest pitch of humane felicity, that so they might exhibit both in body and mind a perfect copy of Christian Imitation, and so knit themselves with the golden chain of charity, that all might not want what the most mercifull God hath given to any one, nor any one what the same mercifull father

ther had beſtowed on them all: eſpecially ſeeing the facility, ſweetneſſe, and evident uſe of this ſociety is ſuch, that it may raiſe up a mind even immerſ'd in the dregges of Earth, much more ſtirre forward any one aſpiring Chriſtian liberty and communion in the way of heaven.

Yet there are not ſome wanting that ſuppoſe that a good deſignement approved and thirſted after by a many, may notwithſtanding be ſometime brought into form, knit and raiſ'd by the animoſity of a few, and perhaps one individuall, which although it be ſhapeleſſe and

low

low at the first, it may by degrees gather strength and form, and by a concourse of Gods blessings rise up to a certain majesty, that so it may be evident there are some sparks of goodneffe dispers'd every where, but they do not often arise into flames: and mindes illuminated from above, are not incident to all but onely some certain times: upon which ground, give me leave to put that into act, which hath been so long in my wishes.

In these our times some who would have given their names to Christ, and abjur'd the World, resolv'd to combine

bine themſelves into a ſocie-
ety, which as it would be
free from all ſuperſtition
and vanity, ſo ſhould it af-
ford all means and further-
ances, in the wayes of true
piety, candour, integrity and
ſincere literature, by which
means good men and deſi-
rous of heaven, while they
continue ſhackl'd withchains
of Earth, might comfort
themſelves with mutuall
charity, and free communi-
cation of all neceſſaries and
ornaments of this life, the
better by common caution
to ſhun the impoſtures and
ſleights of this World, and
advance the excellency of
mans ſpirit, by the know-
ledge

ledge of what hath been discovered since the creation, and in a word enjoy a golden tranquillity and rest in Jesus Christ.

This engagement being harmlesse, not inquinated with any laws or rules of the World, will discover to any good man and lover of Christ its facility and support of happy life, and profer a communion of gifts, since it aimes at and desires nothing else but what Christ himself desired, the Apostles urged, the Church promores, and all Christians are obliged to, to wit, honour to God, civility to nature, culture to mankind not onely

in

in words but in reall actions.

Moreover this ſociety is not to diſſolve any order of life, neither calls any man (unleſſe upon great neceſſity) from his own vocation and courſe of life, but it leaves the body any where, onely knits the minds in Chriſt, which being compoſed to the duties of Piety Honeſty and Wiſdome, it will be eaſie ſo to order all things, that the Head of the Order (Chriſt) be not injur'd, or fellowſhip with the world (to which this ſociety doth profeſſe oppoſition) renewed, but that, the heart the chief of all the Chriſtian Organs

Organs being purged, all the rest may be compos'd to a sweet Harmony of soul and body.

The scope of this Christian society is solely this, after confession of the reformed Protestant Religion, and profession of reformation of life, to follow all means of knowing truth and doing good, to make use of what is already found out, to discover things falsely reputed for truths, to renounce all customes of the world to obey the commandments of Christ, or in a word to represent and expresse the doctrine and manners of our Saviour, in heart, gesture and expression. The

The Head of the ſociety is a Germane Prince, a man moſt illuſtrious for his piety learning and integrity, who hath under him twelve Colleagues, his privy Counſellers, every one eminent for ſome gift of God.

Three of theſe are accounted chief. ſt, the firſt who is Preſident of Religion, the ſecond of Vertue, & the third of Learning; the reſt are divided into three combinations, the Divine, the Cenſor, and the Philoſopher: the Politician, the Hiſtorian and the Oeconomiſt: the Phyſitian, the Mathematician and the Philologiſt, all Germanes: to whom are entruſted

trusted the secrets of the society, to dispose of them to alter them, and to be moderate judges and Arbiters of the rest of the members of the society, to which end at certain and convenient times (God permitting) they meet, to contribute their judgements by letters concerning the publick safety, to prevent approaching enormities, to consider of wholsome counsells offered, to admit suiters into offices, to seek for good men, and to advance the society by all means and wayes whatsoever.

Unto these are added other men tendring faith and the

the propagation of the Kingdome of heaven, of an uncertain number: illuſtrious for devotion, Charity and Wiſdome, the knowledge and experience of whoſe Vertues had before commended them to the ſociety. Theſe are helpfull to the ſociety, by their Authorities, eſtates or proſperous management of affairs, but agreeing all in this, to wit, to ſlight the world, labour for heaven, forget things carnall and be verſed in things ſpirituall, whereof the reſult is, that they not onely know among themſelves, and love what mild, noble, and heavenly-ſpirited men, Germa-

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ny may afford disperſed up and down, but alſo by a mutuall communication of affairs, the benefits of forrain countreys are known, Truth is made to ſhine forth, and integrity to flouriſh, but eſpecially that they on whom, (though more ingenious ſpirits,) adverſe fortune hath caſt the ſhackles of want and obſcurity, might by the bounty of the Colleagues, be freely admitted to thoſe things whereunto their thoughts aſpire, and that they being as 'twere weary of life, becauſe of misfortunes and encombrances, might become agill, the crookedneſſe of this worlds

manners

manners might be rectified, and other priviledges of purer Philosophy be restored: all which should a man consider, and withall how great profit and furtherance it brings to his profession, and condition of life (wherein he cannot at all be hindred) he would willingly grace the society with his nobility, enrich it with his wealth, promote it by his endeavours, direct it by his counsell, or by what way God enables him, procure the prosperity of the society.

1. It is the duty of him who is set over holy things, to make known the purity of Christian Religion, not stain'd

ſtain'd by any corrupt hereſies, that it bring not mens minds into ſuſpenſion, but that it ſhew it ſelf to be ſo as having foundation in the holy word of God, the teſtimony of the Church and conſent of the world: requiring the ſame worſhip of God which Chriſt by his lively word and example preſcribed, exacting Candour, Simplicity, Humility, Patience, Liberality, Temperance, Chaſtity, Suffering, and ſuch like badges of Chriſtianity; commending unto men the word of Croſſe and Light, ſtraightly provoking in all as many as have given up their names

to Christ, and to this ſociety an emulation of Chriſt.

2. Who is chief in Vertue, applies the Rules and Laws of nature, which afford admonitions of humanity and kindneſſe, and allure men by the examples of things well done and ſpoken: namely, how that in all ages and times, and under what kind of religion ſoever, Vertues have had their place and honour. That ſith Heathens have willingly complyed to the injunctions of reaſon, it may not be thought much in us Chriſtians, to propoſe unto our ſelves that equality of life, which if not to Heaven, yet

to

to our Countrey seems most conformable, at least may not be inferiour to that moderation of Gentiles : for unto us, from the insufferable bondage to so many customes, it procures Christian liberty, out of an infinite disproportion a composed equability, out of so many envyings and slaughters mutuall concord and good will. Truly whoever shall examine his affairs according to nature, whether they consist in good name, money, assistance or counsell, he will honour them with lesse opinion and liking.

3. Who is President of

Learning, hath a great charge lying upon him: for now in the worlds weakneſſe, moſt humane affairs are committed to Learning, the maſſe whereof is become infinite, which fills not the world ſo much with truth as falſehood, not ſo much with ſolidity as curioſity; therefore ſtands it us much upon (as farre as in us lies) to weed out the ſuperfluity of humane Learning, returning onely what may further the Chriſtian, and that chiefly, becauſe moſt are of opinion, that it were better not to have to do with that impure maſſe, then to ſhare with others in the misfortunes

tunes which accompany the attempt of it. But we cannot slight Learning, supposing it passes not the limits of Christian simplicity, and be not obstructive to the freedome of the soul: nay we should promote it so farre as that discovering this universe unto us, we are by it convinced of the emptinesse and imperfection of all things, and have our affections raised towards heaven.

The Professour of Learning therefore, when by long acquaintance in affairs and evolution of humane sciences, he hath composed on Idæa of Learning, busies

himſelf onely in that, and ſo by the help of that conſiſtency of ſo many ſciences, he communicates himſelf better to any docill ingeny. For ſeeing to the obtaining of ſo ſeverall kinds of Learning the travell, induſtry, and life of one man cannot ſuffice, yea though the ſcrutiny of former ages further much: it will be worth our labour, to give a brief view of ſo many diverſe things, that one may ſee as it were in a heavenly market, what and how great things, the great Creatour hath vouchſafed man.

Moreover ſeeing by the opinions of ſome and by the perſwaſion and authority of

others

others, things contrary drifted to truth are forced upon us, whereof no man may presume fully to determine, we must (bearing with the weakness of mankind) examine and reform according to heavenly light, and so rest with Christ: which though it seem an attempt greater then many would undertake, yet did they but consider with themselves, what great gifts God is wont to bestow on those whom he hath destined to the Reformation of things, and to what greatness, humane affairs have risen from small beginnings, and what success the excellencies of

great wits have, they would not deſpair of ſome great iſſue of their endeavours.

To this end did men verſ'd in diverſe faculties and ſtudies meet together, that while all were conſcious of their own failings, they might take notice of what corruptions had crept in, before one whom they acknowledged Directour, who having heard the opinions of all, extracted what ſeemed beſt, being ſo carefull to remedy their evils and provide for their good, that a capable and hopefull ingeny did not want any thing it deſired, but was admitted to a univerſall contemplation of affairs,

fairs, and breviary of all Learning. But ſuppoſing it aſpired the perfection of any one ſcience, it ſhould be furniſhed with all inſtruments requiſite to further ſuch an employment (which in ſome places are hard to be gotten:) ſo that he might attain Learning with leſſe difficultie, and more eaſe and delight, then might be done at the ſchools. Which thing, what furtherance, and freedome it affords the beſt wits, a wiſe man will conſider with great pleaſure and admiration.

And ſeeing our Germane tongue is of that perfection as to contain and expreſſe

allhumane things (if it be uſed and ſtudied) nay we are in this endebted to our Countrey, that by the fullneſſe thereof we are freed, as much as may be, from the Tyranny of other languages, ſo that we admit not onely ſuch as have been brought up at ſchool, but other tractable wits to the handling and contemplation of the gifts of God: it hath ſeemed good unto us, that the chief tracts of all ſciences ſhould be ſet forth in our own tongue, which though at firſt ſight it ſeem hard and intractable, by the exercise of a few years will become ſo pleaſant, that we now

now disclaim that emulation and indiscretion of ours in labouring for the Latine tongue with such eagernesse and cost above the rest, with the losse of many years and much wearinesse to our selves Not that we can want the Hebrew Greek and Latine, or slight the elegancies of other tongues which are highly set by in a society: but stooping to those who, though endued with quicknesse of wit, have not leisure for the attaining of diverse tongues, and that a doore may be opened to search out Gods works, which the Grammarians have damm'd up.

4. The

4. The Divine to that end hath Books, treating not onely of the Fundamentalls of Religion, but the depth of all wisdome, Policy and Power, and of the composure of this Universe, where he finds Christ our Centre, and the Prince of all truth and goodnesse, to whom unlesse we be likned, all our performances are lame; he oppoſeth Atheisme and all ungodlinesse, but chiefly Hypocrisie, which he knows hath ever been obstructive to Christ, and discomposed even the best things: therefore he importunes men to serve God, to heare him, to obey him, to love

love him, and to be so possessed of him, that through his name, they may abstain from the blandishments of the world. Wherein if he prevaile, good God! what alteration will seize on the life, counsels, affections and endeavours of man, what things we shall willingly neglect, and slight, how we shall be content to suffer and obey otherwise then before! So that the Bible which was the subject of contention, and magazine of hot and emulous disputations, will become unto us the Garrison of our faith, the holy place of prayers, the enclosure of charity, the

storehouse

ſtorehouſe of Myſteries, the ſchool of Virtues and the Theatre of Wiſdome.

5. The Politician knits humane ſociety, with the bonds of right and juſtice, and ſo builds up our converſation to a ſubſerviency to the end wherefore we were created, this life being but a Preludium or Preface to that which hereafter we ſhall enjoy in heaven. He weighs worldly Policy, and by Chriſtian light and equality conſiders the forms of commonwealths, and corrects their diſtempers. He avoids confuſion and looſeneſſe but chiefly Tyranny, under what preſence ſoever it cloak it ſelf,

ſelf, and ſets in Oppoſition to them the kingdome of God, which he ſtands for by his ſo many inſtructions: but eſpecially pointing us to our head Chriſt, who as he did redeem all and every of his with his precious bloud, ſo it is fit he ſhould ordain laws of equality, and ſhould preſcribe degrees of Offices and Chriſtian Hierarchy. Whom did we obey, none would groan under the eaſie yoke of the Goſpel, and deſire more liberty then this neighbours ſervant.

6. The Naturaliſt is a Tenant of this earth, and as it were the treaſurer of nature, whence he ſearches motions,

motions, differencies, uſes and excellencies of all creatures, and makes them as 'twere Tributaries to Mankind; he looks carefully into both worlds, finds out, acknowledges and wonders at the Omnipreſence of God, but eſpecially doth he ſhew himſelf in emulation of the terrene God, that is man, and gets together the experience of many ages, and by diſpoſing it into order, doth as 'twere rear an Amphitheatre of humane wiſdome. He ſtrenuouſly oppoſes Fables and Opinions, eſpecially Sophiſtry, which while by obſcure words and reaſonings, it poſſeſſes

poſſeſſes mens minds and diſtracts them, it onely ſtrives to draw us from things to words, from experience to conjectures, from events to gueſſes, from ſerious things to Toyes, and in a word from the light of heaven to the darkneſſe of Earth, that (if poſſible) it might take away and deceive us, by ſpecious impoſtures and faſcinations of that which God hath liberally offered; whereof if by admonition we beware, 'tis unexpreſſible what abundance and what Variety of things will be diſcovered.

7. Now follows another Triumvirate, whereof the first

first is called the Censor, who is preserver of Order in the society, and the Master of the Ceremonies. Harmony of Manners and an endeavour of Christian love most commend this man: and therefore it is he that composes the dissonancy of the Colleagues and reconciles them. This man brings into order the differences of degrees, and Prerogatives of bloud; and so disposes of some mens qualities and others forwardnesse, by an ingenuous proportion, that they hinder not Christian charity, and draw on no incivility nor confusion. He assignes every man some ho-

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nour whereof he may not boaſt, but remember what part he acts in this ſcene, to referre all to the glory of his Creatour. He takes down the ſwelling of mens minds, and erects poverty, by humanity and liberality, and (as much as may be) prevents the frowardneſſe of fortune which ſometimes makes the greateſt wits to ſtoop: laſtly 'tis his care to preſerve, to inculcate, and promote all thoſe orders which he hath found profitable to the Chriſtian ſociety, as likewiſe to exhort to mutuall love.

8. The ſecond is the Hiſtorian a man not onely to be experienced in Antiquity,

quity, but alſo to be verſed in the affairs of the preſent age who by his acquaintance with earth hath learned to deſire heaven: this man repreſents the deeds, enactions, inventions and ſayings of men and ages, propoſes patterns as well of the kingdome of Chriſt as of the Tyranny of Satan, the Oppoſition of good, the monſtrouſneſſe of evil, the impriſonment of truth the Victories of falſehood, the obſcurity of reaſon, the fame of wicked men, and on the one ſide allures by that which is right, and on the other deterres by the uglineſſe of that which is unjuſt. For it is a great

great advantage to see the wonders God had shewn in other Ages and mans complyance or resistance, as 'twere in a map or glasse. Hence he skirmishes against the supine negligence of Barbarisme, which even in this open Theatre of God, walks with her eyes shut and her ears stopped, intending nothing but what is bestiall. For who are ignorant of God, and neglectfull of the affairs of earth and themselves, are onely cramm'd here below, and do not look up to the deity, nor participate of Eternitie.

9. The third is the Mathematician a man of wonderfull

derfull ſagacity, who applyes the inſtruments of all Arts and inventions of man: his buſineſſe lies about number meaſure and weight; he knows the commerce that is between heaven and earth; here is there as large a field to be till'd by humane Induſtry, as in nature: for every part of Mathematicks requires a ſeverall and that a moſt laborious Artiſt, which nevertheleſſe muſt all aim at this mark, namely to contemplate the Unity of Chriſt among ſo many admirable inventions, of numbring meaſuring and weighing, & to obſerve the wiſe architecture of God in the fabrick

of this Universe. Hitherto will the Mechanicks assist with their slights and subtilties, which are not so ignoble and sordid as the Sophisters pretend, but rather set forth the use and practice of Arts, and therefore very partially are disesteem'd in comparison of loquacity, But it is the part of a true Mathematician to adorn and enrich them with Rules of Art, whereby mens labours are diminished, and the Prerogative of industry, and the strength and dominion of reason are made more manifest.

10. There remains yet another Triumvirate, where-

of

of in this learned ſociety there is great account: the firſt is the Philoſopher, of the ſect of thoſe old Philoſophers, who by glimmering of nature came to the light of heaven: He, as the Divine hath the written word, hath the printed word, and in contemplation of this viſible world finds the Creatour, and worſhips him: his ſtudy is ſubjectated in nature and the Creatures, whence he obſerves the changes and conflicts of life and death, light and darkneſſe, truth and falſehood, and diſcernes them by the rayes of Chriſtian Religion. Moreover he weighes the endeavours, proceedings

ceedings and labours of those admired wits, to whom it was given in mid-darkneſſe, to ſee ſomewhat, eſpecially he examines that deſired tranquillity of the mind, & draws it to Chriſt, in whoſe tranſcendent perfections and excellencies he ſtands amazed, and in that reſpect upbraids Chriſtians of their indocility.

11. The ſecond is the Oeconomiſt, not onely ſeen in Agriculture, and the adminiſtration of houſhold affairs, which by happy ſtudy he hath attained to, but conſpicuous for his great skill and faithfullneſſe. The exchequer of the ſociety gathered

out of the liberall contribution of the Colleagues, is committed to this mans cuſtody. It belongs to him to keep all treaſures of the ſociety ſafe, to receive and ſend forth letters, to be provided of fit men for diverſe imployments, to beſtow alms, as alſo to be helpfull to the meaner of the ſociety; all things wherein the whole ſociety is intereſted are intruſted to him, that what ſeems good to the ſociety he ſhould faithfully diſpatch, buy, ſell, hire, borrow, for no doubt expences may be lawfull in this way, that great men might have the affairs of diverſe Countreys and not

not a fained but reall Image of the world represented unto them: that noblemen might see and hear their equalls in Virtues witnesses and Trumpeters of their own; that rich men might have opportunity to make use of their wealth & obtain truer pleasures: that learned men might enjoy the benefit of other acute and excellent wits: that poore men might in their need find sure benefactours: that they who have children might provide for their education and turelage; that they that are afflicted might find redresse, and that all of the society might by the expence of money enjoy

the greateſt benefits. For thoſe onely have right to be their heirs who ſeek God & promote the kingdome of Chriſt: who ſerve & ſuccour every good man, and who equally devote themſelves to Piety, Honeſty & Learning. O unhappy treaſures which got together contrary to Gods word, are ſpent upon ungodlineſſe, and amongſt wicked men: but happy riches which gathered through the bleſſing of God are ſpent upon Chriſt, whereof good men receive the benefit.

12. The third is the Philologiſt who mancipates his endeavours to the ſtudy of the

the Tongues, and to the elegancy of Learning. He is against the commonaly of Grammarians, who in learning ſet moſt by the Phraſe, but lead men through the gate of the Tongues in the ſpacious fields of Wiſdome, Policy and goodneſſe, and thence teaches men to ſerve God, adorn their lives and elevate their fancies. He oppoſes the depraved cuſtomes of ſchools, when youth not religiouſly brought up, are hardly brought to Chriſt, but rather are led by the muddy wayes of this world, a thing not to be approved of a man aſpiring heaven. Therefore Chriſtian ſchools

come within the care of the ſociety, and are provided for their own children, that is, the leſſer Chriſtians & Apprentiſes of heaven, not for ſuch as have given up their names to wickedneſſe; our Philologiſt is the overſeer of this ſchool, a man ſeriouſly devout, of a laudable life and exact diſcipline, whoſe being Preſident of liberall wits much advances the Chriſtian liberty.

Theſe twelve do finiſh the firſt round, without injury or impeachment to the reſt, for the judicature and diſtribution of endeavours is ſometimes granted to them upon evidence of their Virtues,

tues, neither is every faculty confined to one sort of persons, but made up of the conjunction of many: so the Divine hath as Adjutants, Preachers, Disputants, Contemplatours: the Politician, Lawyers, Counsellers; the Naturalist, Physitians, Anatomists, Surgeons: the Historian, Chronologers, Geographers, Travellers: the Mathematician, Musitians, Mechanicks: Philosopher, Chymists, Metallists; the Oeconomist, Printers, Espialls, Messengers: the Philologist, Logicians, Rhetoricians, Poets: all have such Adjutants as may encrease their Professions, and have

more faith and care to the common buſineſſe, ſeeing that they have willingly agreed in Chriſt, to be helpfull one to another in ſetting forward the work of Chriſt, endeavouring to reſiſt the world, and with Gods aſſiſtance to ſhake of the yoke of Satan.

For this Society is required a good man, what rank or condition ſoever he be of; learned, or unlearned, rich or poore, old or young, whoſe goodneſſe ſhall conſiſt in his love to Chriſt; hatred of the world, and charity towards his neighbour: who weary of the preſent vanity, and conſcious of his own imper-

imperfections, is desirous of Christian liberty and accordingly labours for it.

This is the first and chiefest Qualification, that a noble man, or a rich man, or an excellently learned man, or a politick or projective man shall be most welcome.

For the greater the gifts of God are, the greater means have we to provide for our selves, and to contribute of our treasures to the sanctuary of Christ, whereof this is the best means, that strength riches learning and endeavours put together we might become as 'twere one Christian body, (a thing impossible to single members) and

withall discover to our selves aswell as our brethren the profits and knowledge of the world; which in a seperation would be very difficult.

Neither is there any reason, that because of the communion of Society, it were lawfull for us to cast of the care of houses and families, and leave our condition of life, sith most things are done by letters, sealed with faithfullnesse and silence, unlesse the businesse be such as requires the concerning of many; so no man shall be pressed beyond his power and ability, but a businesse of so great concernment shall be managed and dispatched

patched altogether out of freewill. Whereof certainly if Christian love be the rule and measure, so many excellent men vouchsafing their concurrence and equanimity, no man will stick to joyn his affection with the rest to a Christian advantage, but will hope good things from the society of good men. There shall not need many laws and injunctions to deterre beginners; for if one whom God hath enriched with excellent gifts hath approved himself to any member of the society, doubtlesse out of the facility of his nature he will accomplish and perform beyond hope, that

which

which may advance the honour advantage and Propagation of the ſociety : the ſignes and Qualifications ſhall be ſuch as theſe: to profeſſe the true proteſtant Religion, to put on a fervent love and tenderneſſe of aſſiſtance towards the ſociety. To diſengage himſelf from the fellowſhip and vanity of the world ; to keep ſecrets with all faithfullneſſe : willingly to ſuccour his neighbour in need: to be carefull to promote the common buſineſſe, and ſo every way give evidence of his faith to God, his Charity towards his neighbour, and endowments to Poſterity.

Now

Now the God in whose name this is begun, grant that it may sincerely serve him and the glory of Christ in this dotage of the world, that it may conduce to the good of men, press'd with burthens of earth, that it may discover the treacheries of satan among the many pollutions of this world, that it may call back the wellnigh banish-ed virtues, gainsay ill Customes, propagate learning, cashier all Barbarisme, and may make us as many as have disclaimed the service of this world, do high'y prize and desire Christian liberty, free, facile, ready and

and willing, and after a ſhort journey, give us admittance into the glorious ſociety of Jeſus Chriſt, and perpetuall communion of the bleſſed Saints Amen.

The Right Hand Of Christian Love offered.

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1. JOHN 5. 3,

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.

CAMBRIDGE,

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1647.

The Right hand of Christian love

THat one man is as no man, and that all men do but as 'twere make up one man; was the wise observation of those of old: For however one man excell another, and some are raised to the highest pitch of honour; yet hath it not been granted to any man, either to be exempt of humane weakness, or not to need mutuality of assistance: but it is every good mans aim, by his endowments

ments and endeavours, to contribute his assistance to the common business of mankind.

There are two kinds of Publick endeavours: one out of constraint, the other voluntary: the first is of the world, which oppresses all that give up their names unto it with hard bondage, and entertains them with many unwelcome labours, granting no respite nor paying no wages, save to end their wretched lives with indignations and gratitude: Of the other Christ is himself the Authour and chief, in that humane similitude of his acknowledging us his members,

members, binding us & admitting us to many honourable actions, cherishing, animating, beautifiing this his body, and preparing it for further perfection. Therefore as the world hath its kingdomes and Empires, which by manifold bonds knit are together & united, so hath Christ his Church on earth, yet not exempt from the Tyranny of the world, or seated in an inaccessible rock, but so joyned & strengthned by the bonds of mutuall charity, that it is able to defend it self against the world, enjoy the benefits of earth, and have a communication of all good things within it self. And

And hence hath Christian friendship its Originall which farre transcends the most perfect friendship of this world, which doth not onely teach, and inculcate what may be decent, advantageous and delightfull, but shews what may reconcile us to God, overcome satan, constrain nature, open heaven, and keep under the flesh, which though indeed it be rare even among Christians yet there hath been heretofore and is in these our times such a friendship, if we would stirre up those whom the same holy spirit guides, and have an equall desire of mutuall assistance.

Christian

Christian friendship is the concurrence of good men in Christ, with a purpose to serve God aright, seriously to entertain the Gospel, sincerely to love their neighbours, carefully to avoid the world, really to labour after heaven. The Ancients in one word called it the imitation of Christ, because it implyed a conformity to the example of our Saviour, and received from him laws, method, and all orders: which though under the mystery of iniquity it be much inquinated, & hath suffered much superstition, yet ought not the errours of our Ancestours so displease us, as that we should exceed in

in the defect more then the did in the excesse, and whi we avoid the simplicity o former ages we should ca off all observance and adhe sion unto Christ.

1. Therefore this sacre amity, ought to knit goo men, that is such as bein weary of the vanity and bon dage of this world, prize hea ven, and with their heart de sire it, to which end they g to Christ, of whom as the have the word of salvation and the holy promises, so d they of him learn to walk a right, receiving their heart to liberty out of the bondage and fetters of this world, composing other things wit

patience

patience & tranquillity, and receiving comfort of them by a mutuall communication of all good gifts, mutually instructing, chastising and encouraging one another, & lastly enter into a prospect and dayly contemplation of this world. Which thing though it be universally expedient to all Christians, yet there is no reason why some few should not propose this law of love to themselves, & give both hands & hearts to it, that it being circumscribed with certain conditions they might enjoy it with better surety, and strength in a private manner: which fellowship, no man of what dignity,

dignity or excellency ſoever if he hath learned Chriſt cannot but entertain. For Chriſtian love, which hereafter ſhall poſſeſſe heaven, doth not misbecome, Greatneſſe, Nobility, Learning, or any endowment, but graces its Profeſſour in any place, time or condition, ſo farre is it from returning a man more ignoble, and deveſt him of his honours, that every one ſhall be ſure to retain what he enjoyes: ſo Chriſtian affairs ſhall be better managed having the badge of charity; ſeeing all would be accounted the ſervants of Chriſt, the redeemed of Chriſt, the members of Chriſt,

Christ, coheirs with Christ' the Disciples of Christ, and (which is the greateſt honour of all(the Brethren of Christ, acknowledging no difference in themſelves, but as acting various parts in one ſcene.

2. But this concurrence implyes the profeſſion of the ſame Religion, to wit that which Christ himſelf eſtabliſhed and taught us, and is in this old age of the world wonderfully reſtored, which though at this day it be filled with nothing but noiſe and contention, writings, threatnings, and an unſupportable burden and number of ceremonies, yet it doth

leſſe then it ought, draw and form us Chriſtians, and ſo faſhion us to the example of Chriſt, and prevails more in word then works, therefore doth it admoniſh us to be carefull that we reſt not in a bare name nor raſhly cenſure others, nor corrupt Chriſtian ſimplicity with the admixtion of the world.

Then at length ſhall we be of the beſt religion, if we worſhip the true God, one in three, expreſſed in the world, ſeen in his ſoveraignty, and manifeſted in his word: if we underſtand how that man was at firſt perfect, then loſt, afterwards recovered, and laſtly to be reſtored

red by the designe of mercy, the work of love and accommodation of faith, if we admire the exinanition & exaltation of Christ, knit in the mystery of union, if we heare him as our Prophet, obey him as our King, and employ him as our Priest, that having fraught our souls within the Ark of his Church, we might by the gales of the holy spirit and the wafting of Angels sail through the troubled sea of this World into the haven of Eternitie.

3. This is that which Christ willeth, all whose words declare unto us the ardent love of God, the most

faithfull miniſtery of Chriſt, the carefull inſtruction of the Holy ghoſt, the pleaſant yoke of our duty, the ſervile bondage of the World, the wicked impoſtures of ſatan, the ineffable price of heaven, whereby Chriſtians might be ſeparated and diſtinguiſhed from worldlings, by faith, faſhion and manners, and be as 'twere to outbrave all the monſters of Satan; which unleſſe obtained, whatſoever things holy, or unholy ſpeak Chriſt, what ever men form or reform, it will advantage little or nothing.

4. This is that which ſhames our boaſting, and bewrayes

wrayes in our hearts a neglect, if not an hatred of our neighbour, whom to love is the ſymbole and badge of a Chriſtian: which love if any ſhould ſearch for between ſuperiours and inferiours, great men and mean men, noble and ignoble, clergy and laity, learned and unlearned, rich and poore, or other ſuch Chriſtians of ſeverall conditions, he will no doubt find a want, and acknowledge there is ſomewhat unlike Chriſt, neither will there be wanting a reaſon why he ſhould check his conſcience and ſecurity, and tremble at the triall of our charity, when between the

children of God ſo great diſparity, and ſo unreaſonable inequality ſhall appear.

5. For wherein do many, yea moſt Chriſtians differ I will not ſay from Jews, Turks & Heathens, but that I may ſpeak more favourably from worldlings, who at their matriculation among Chriſtians did all renounce the World, and profeſſe an hatred, and perpetuall reſiſtance of it, who nevertheleſſe do now all live according to the rules, ceremonies and cuſtomes of the World, which are not onely alien and diverſe from Chriſtians, but even unapproved by reaſon and nature,

ture, having no fear nor reverence of the Gospel, excusing this their filthy life under the umbra.e of humane frailty; who are most modest, cast it on the merits of our Saviour, some more intemperate suppose forgiveneſſe cannot be denied them, & another sort gather themselves to libertiniſme, not onely of a discomposed life, but professedly wicked, yet all confessing Christ, and palliating him to their actions.

6. Therefore we inferre that none ought to be accounted truly and really Christians, but who so earneſtly and ardently labour

for heaven, that they are content with the Merchant, to joyn endeavour and wealth, and all to ſerve that end, and for its ſake will ſtoutly undergo and patiently endure all dangers, in compariſon of that, ſcorn all the ſpecious blandiſhments of the World, and refer to that all their wiſhes and deſerts of their labours, and live as ſtrangers on earth, thinking it belongs not to them, to be carefull of the World, wherein they are but Pilgrims, who though they cannot throughly put of the fleſh, but are hindred, and fear ever and anon, becauſe of the weakneſſe

neſſe and intractableneſſe thereof, yet never ſubmit their necks ſo to the yoke of the world, as to proceed in the broad way, but by continuall endeavours and exercitations, and by mutuall incitations and deſires imploring the aſſiſtance of God, attend onely that which they find acceptable to God, and diſpleaſing to Satan.

Therefore whenſoever a man remembreth he is a Chriſtian, ſo often ſhould he call to mind, the obligation which he made, to believe, think, ſpeak, deſire, ſuffer, learn, otherwiſe then he who gives up his name to the

World, otherwiſe I ſay, altogether, ſith Chriſt, is of unreconciled enmity with the World, and requires all his to be ſuch. For ſeeing a Chriſtian expects the greateſt and beſt things, and the moſt extreme puniſhments are ordained for the World; no doubt but they ſhall participate in the puniſhment, who did follow the converſation of it, and they ſolely are reſerved for honour in heaven, who did abjure earth, and with a true faith warr'd againſt infidelity: unleſſe we expect that God ſhould admit as well the oppreſſours as the oppreſſed, Hypocrites as true Profeſ-

ſours,

sours, those that dance as those that weep, the fat as the hungry, the proud as the humble without any distinction, and receive promiscuously those that repent, and those that repent not.

Neither may we ever attribute to our selves that sanctity and innocency of conversation as may deserve heaven, when we can never sufficiently deplore our corruptions, and accuse the imperfection of our own works: and therefore worthily ought we to referre all to Christ, commit all things to him, beg and desire all things of him, aiming onely at this, that, since the

World

World doth obtain all things from his, or indeed from us, Chriſt may alſo have ſome of our performances, which being eaſie, cannot without affected obſtinacy, ſlight or malice, be denied him, as ſuppoſe moderation in our manners, temperance in our appetites, humanity in our actions, ſtaiedneſſe in our conditions, &c. which by a Chriſtian friendſhip, among many or few, might be ſo diſpoſed, as ſhould make the ſociety of good men pleaſant, profitable and glorious in this or any other age, and ſeeing God hath not his in one place, but as 'twere diſperſed

perſed every where, aſwell groaning under the Babyloniſh captivity, as enduring the inſolencies of wicked men, ſo that ſometimes they complain with Elias that they are left alone; it much conduceth to the Chriſtian republick, that one know another, whereby the hard ſervitude of the World might be mitigated by mutuall conſolation, ſith the communion of the ſame holy ſpirit, the ſame life, the ſame deſires, the ſame complaints are heard among them, and they do breath Chriſtian liberty as 'twere from one ſoul: which though it cannot be enjoyed

free

free & flouriſhing on earth, yet it cheriſheth virtuous minds with a ſecret pleaſure, that, although all things may be led captive, yet they experimentally know both in themſelves and other Chriſtians, that the ſoul muſt be relinquiſht to the diſpoſall of her creatour.

Therefore (humbly praying Chriſt himſelf to go along with us) have we thought good, to reach this hand of faith and Chriſtian love to all and every one of thoſe, who being experienced in the bondage of the World, and wearied with its weight, do deſire with all their hearts Chriſt as their

their deliverer, that upon ſight and approbation of the premiſſes, they may joyn and knit with us in an indiſſolvable concord, the centre of which muſt be Chriſt himſelf, the ſeat Chriſtian breaſts, the law Chriſtian life, the end a Chriſtian heaven, and that nothing may make the World more odious and contemptible, then Chriſtian religion, whoſe uſe is inæſtimable, that Chriſtians may mutually wiſh one another well, help one another, and care for one another, and aſwell by counſell as aſſiſtance, word or deed, preſence or abſence, be auxiliary;

iliary; let the rule of this be the example of Christ himself, who though of infinite perfections, yet is so accommodated to humane Virtues, that he may farre easilier admit us through the conduit of faith, to any shadow or representation of them, then to the Theatricall, and Histrionicall Aperies of this World: neither doth this friendship bring in any novelty, strangenesse or superstition, but onely seriously inculcates what we before believed, acknowledged and professed: it dissolves no courses of life, nor introduces any confusion, but admonishes of a Christian,

mutuall

mutuall and rationall estimation and distinction, it doth not throw away worldly wealth; nor hoard it up, but rather employ it on Christ and Christian uses then in toyes of the World and objects of vanity, it doth not slight humane sciences but compares them with heaven and wisdome from above, it doth not shrink from society, and hide it self in some cave, but walks by a sagacious contemplation, not affecting any singularity, but rather enjoying a sweet acquiescence in Christian simplicity, integrity, and uprightnesse; therefore whoever thou art, good man,

man, that is, Christian thirsting after heaven, and nauseating earth, I beseech thee by Jesus Christ the Prince of love in all humility, reverence, duty, love, and as a brother, from my very soul, that after equilibration of Christian friendship, and mundane circumstances, seriously with me to apply thy mind to that which thou shalt discover, either by divine revelation, experiments of other Christians, or the dictates of thy own conscience, most advantagious both to body and soul, that at length we may dare to follow God, leave the World, love

Christ,

Christ, hate Satan, exercise the spirit, subdue the flesh, embrace truth, hate errour, love our neighbours, deny our selves, all which being parts of the divine league, with Gods help plain and easie, though by the impostures of Satan, they are made appear heavy and troublesome, and exchang'd for unsupportable burdens. We do not so dream of Christ, and are wise unto the World, we do not so professe Religion, and hope in truth for a certain habitation; let not the World according to its usuall custome deceive us; Christ having been so oft denied, will not accept

accept of the offall of the earth: but rather while the World calls, let us fly, while it cheriſhes, let us reſiſt, while it flatters, let us diſtruſt, while it draws, let us break away, while it rewards, let us refuſe, while it ſnatches, let us ſlip away, though with the loſſe of our cloak, which that we be enabled to do, we beſeech the Almighty, in whom we reſt.

FINIS.

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